Lake Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille River, Priest Lake and Priest River Commission Meeting MINUTES
June 4, 2015 from 8:30 AM until 11:30 AM
Dover City Hall
699 Lakeshore Avenue Dover, Idaho 83825

Commissioner's present: Ford Elsaesser, Brent Baker, Ben Conard, Linda Mitchell, Craig Hill, Erin Mader (Coordinator), Molly McCahon (Asst. Coordinator)

22 in audience

8:35 am – Commence meeting. Move by Linda to go into Executive Session, seconded by Craig.

Linda moved to hire Molly as 20 hour a week employee at rate of $21.00 per hour on July 1, start of the fiscal year. Craig seconded the motion, *the motion carried.*

Linda moved to give Erin a two dollar an hour raise on July 1, start of the fiscal year. Craig seconded the motion*, the motion carried.*

At 8:58 am Linda the Executive Session was closed and the regular meeting started.

Approval of Minutes:

Brent moved to approve the 2/18/14 minutes. Craig seconded the motion, *the motion carried.*

Agency presentations

Bob Howard, Bonner County, presented on the emergency response plan being developed in response to increased rail traffic in Bonner County. Bob explained that the Sandpoint City Mayor requested that Idaho do a risk assessment of Bakken oil transportation through local communities in Bonner, Boundary and Kootenai Counties. In August of 2014 many different entities came together to develop a geographical response plan (GRP). A GRP is a site specific initial response strategy for a spill of oil or oil products on water. A GRP provides initial guidelines for responders in the event of spill, greatly reducing the time needed to make decisions about how to respond. Many different resources are considered in the GRP including sensitive species and habitat, water intakes, culturally significant sites, economic resources and potential spill sources. The scope of work for the project includes developing rail and highway hazardous materials response plans, as well as, establishing working groups for each county consisting of local first responders, environmental subject matter experts including state, federal and private partners.

Questions following Bob's presentation addressed these points:

- The GRP is being finalized by the railroads and then it will be released to the public.
- Although oil has become the focus of the GRP, it addresses all types of hazardous spills.

- The railroads pay about one million dollars to Bonner County each year as property tax. This amount is not impacted by the number of trains passing on the tracks each year. This money goes to individual taxing districts and therefore is not available for crossing improvements.

Jean Gerth and Mary Costello, Rock Creek Alliance, updated the Lakes Commission on proposed mining in the basin. Jean reviewed a basic history of the proposed Rock Creek Mine. The mine has had a number of owners starting with Asarco, then Sterling, then Revett, and currently it is owned by Hecla Mining. The mine's facilities would be located twenty-five miles up the Clark Fork River from the Idaho border and adjacent to Rock Creek. The Alliance's major concerns for the mine are: the tailings impoundment which is one quarter mile from the Clark Fork River, pollution loading into the river, and possible dewatering of Rock Creek and Bull River.

Jean and Mary reviewed the basic history of the permit attempts for the mine. In 2006 a permit for discharge of contaminated water from the tailings impoundment was revoked because of a rise in arsenic levels in ground water. In 2008, a permit to discharge three million gallons a day into Clark Fork River was revoked. The general construction permit was denied because 400 to 1400 tons per year of sediment was proposed to be discharged to Rock Creek, but this permit application is being developed again.

In 2010 a federal court ruling revoked the USFS Record of Decision for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the mine. Soon the supplemental EIS will be released which should address the concerns of the court. This EIS will have a forty-five day comment period before the ROD is given. Mary commented that phase 1 of the Rock Creek project can begin once the permits allowing discharge into Rock Creek are granted. The tailings impoundment and discharge into the Clark Fork River are later issues.

Mary briefly spoke of the Montanore Mine which is proposed to be developed in the Upper Kootenai Watershed. Although this project is in the Kootenai watershed it would dewater the East Fork of the Bull River which is part of the Clark Fork watershed. Exploration for this mine started some years ago, but they never reached the depth of the deposit because drilling led to nitrogen pollution of Libby creek. The project was shut down and permits were relinquished back to Montana.

Trevor Downen and Rick Pendergrass from the Bonneville Power Administration presented on the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) operations planning. Trevor explained that the FCRPS operates 31 hydroelectric projects with 209 turbine generating units. The FCRPS generates power worth $3-4 billion annually and spends about $300 million annually on basic costs not including transmission costs or improvements to the system. The operational objectives of the FCRPS are flood control, irrigation, navigation, recreation, operations for listed and unlisted fish species, control area services, and power production.

Of the 31 projects operated by the federal government, five are storage facilities. Albeni Falls Dam (AFD) is a storage project. Storage projects are essential for flood control throughout the system.

Trevor explained that AFD doesn't produce a whole lot of power, but the water running through AFD produces a lot of power as it moves downstream. One cubic foot of water moving through AFD can produce 2 MegaWatts (MW) of power at AFD, but that same water can produce 60 MW at downstream federal projects and about 130 MW total at all of the downstream projects combined. On an average year the five storage projects can only store about thirty percent of water in system. Trevor explained that in the storage projects of the FCRPS, AFD is the only project that water levels are managed for recreation throughout the summer which means that dry and wet years are operated similarly. Trevor then went over the annual operation objectives for the FCRPS.
Trevor gave a basic explanation for power planning in the FCRPS. Generation (supply) must equal load (demand) or system frequency alters. This does not usually happen perfectly within the system so typically supply and demand are adjusted by selling and buying electricity. He went over the planning horizons including the short and mid-term planning process and the real time operations. He also described the uncertainty included in power planning. There are always uncertainties in the demand which can be affected by temperatures, economic trends, and technological changes. Market depth can be impacted in unpredictable ways. Streamflow is uncertain and forecasts and flows are updated around the clock.

Rick and Trevor addressed a number of questions with these responses.

- It is extremely rare to run out of power to buy or sell. If there is a generation shortage and there is no power to buy then a power crisis occurs. He said that in a developing energy crisis in 2001, BPA paid irrigators not to irrigate, the State Governors pleaded to the citizens to conserve water use, and eventually Grand Coulee was drafted below fish levels to alleviate the crisis.
- Annual power sales to California average in the range of $200-300 million dollars and purchases from California are typically around $50 to $100 million dollars. This gives about a ten percent break to northwest ratepayers.
- This is a dry year with summer water levels falling in the lowest ten percent on record. A number of strategies have been implemented to manage through August and September. Libby, Hungry Horse, and Grand Coulee are being drafted more than usual.

Tom Woolf, Idaho Department of Agriculture, gave an update on aquatic invasive species in the basin.
The deep freeze this fall did a good job of controlling Eurasian watermilfoil in the drawdown areas of Pend Oreille. There is a possible treatment for milfoil planned in Boyer Slough this year. Divers will be working in Cocolalla and Priest Lakes. Biodegradable barriers will continue to be used at City Beach. A hybrid milfoil investigation will take place this summer. Tom warned that we are likely to see heavy plant growth this summer due to the warm water temperatures and long summer season.

Tom spoke about flowering rush. He explained that a dry ground treatment for rush is showing promise. Treatment plots were set up this srping to study the efficacy of Imazapyr and Imazamox on flowering rush in the dry ground and they will be analyzed this fall after water levels drop again. He explained that flowering rush has spread throughout the entire Pend Oreille system and is now quite dense in areas. He explained that the goal is management of rush, eradication is not plausible.

Tom described the small population of Asian clams in Ellisport Bay. He reviewed the water quality impacts of Asian clams. Researchers from the University of Idaho are conducting an experiment on the clams in coordination with many other entities. This spring sodium hydroxide was placed under impermeable barriers on the clam population to reduce pH in the hopes of killing the clams. The results will be evaluated when the water comes back down in the fall.

Tom went over the inspection station program. He explained that a new station is opened in Clark Fork and a new roving station will move around the state as well. Idaho still has the best program in the country mainly because of the mandatory invasive species sticker that presents continuous funding to the program. Other states are following Idaho's lead and trying to instill similar programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.